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Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

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Addendum

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In 2001, UNDP contributed to the preparation of several reports or pre-reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) through its direct inputs as well as through its inputs and comments via the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which has become, since the end of 2001, the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in the context of the reform of inter-agency coordination mechanisms initiated by the Secretary-General. These reports were: (a) Management of buildings: practices of selected United Nations system organizations relevant to the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters; (b) United Nations system support for science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean; (c) Review of management and administration in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); (d) Enhancing governance oversight role: Structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports; (e) Review of management and administration in the World Health Organization (WHO).

2. The present report summarizes the general scope of the JIU reports and highlights recommendations of particular relevance to UNDP, noting the comments made by UNDP to the final reports and indicating any particular points for consideration or action by the Executive Board.

I. INDIVIDUAL REPORTS

A. Management of buildings: practices of selected United Nations system organizations relevant to the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters (JIU/REP/2001/1)

Scope

3. The objectives of the report are to examine operational and financial issues of building management pertaining to the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters buildings in the light of management practices of selected United Nations system organizations as well as to assist Member States and the Secretariat in considering measures aimed at timely and systematic maintenance and capital improvements at United Nations Headquarters.

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Recommendations of interest to UNDP

4. The key recommendations are: (a) in the context of the capital master plan, the General Assembly should review the practice and establish a policy on the management and maintenance of the United Nations buildings on the basis of the proposal submitted by the Secretary-General; (b) the United Nations Secretariat should take measures aimed at full compliance of its buildings with the local building codes, with a view to ensuring safety, security and a sound working environment in the United Nations Headquarters; (c) financial and non-financial support from the host government and the local authorities needs to be solicited and encouraged in the implementation of the current project for renovating and improving the United Nations Headquarters buildings; (d) the Secretary-General should revise and enforce norms and standards for the allocation of office space at the United Nations Headquarters and other duty stations in order to avoid discrimination and disputes.

Comments by UNDP

5. UNDP adheres fully to the recommendations of the report and considers that despite the recognized principle of inviolability of United Nations premises, the standard practice is to follow voluntarily local building codes of safety, security, environmental standards, fire protection, and energy conservation. In the same vein, UNDP considers that continuous relations with host countries are an indispensable support in this sphere and are the best ways to secure help and assistance. The tragic events of 11 September 2001 have reinforced the necessity to keep security the top of priorities as well as to keep continuous relations with the local authorities.

B. United Nations support for science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (JIU/REP/2001/2)

Scope

6. The objective of this report is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the technical cooperation provided by organizations of the United Nations system to endogenous capacity-building in science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Recommendations of interest to UNDP

7. The key recommendations are: (a) the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development may wish to discuss the desirability, feasibility and timeliness of a United Nations system joint programme for science and technology, modelled on the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS and to make appropriate recommendations to the Economic and Social Council; (b) the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and specialized agencies, funds and programmes, should study the policy and operational approaches of the Inter-American Development Bank to capacity-building in information technology, in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to derive lessons that could be applied in other developing regions; (c) United Nations system organizations should increase their coordination in assessing science and technology networks in the region in order to identify possible areas for strengthening South-South cooperation and continue to monitor the practical results of biotechnology research in the region.

Comments by UNDP

8. As the manager of the resident coordinator system at the country level and as chair of the UNDG mechanism, UNDP is strongly encouraging joint programming initiatives at the country level and among different partners, including the United Nations system itself. The issue of joint programming is a complex one that is involving different levels of constituencies, including the Executive Board of each fund and programme member

of the UNDG Executive Committee as well as more extensively by each agency of the CEB. An orientation note has been circulated to each country team in the world to share good practices and experiences as well as directions for future actions, an issue that is a high priority of the UNDG programme of work for 2002. Science and technology will certainly benefit in the medium term from the results of UNDG work in 2002, which will be shared with the Executive Boards. On the substantive aspects of a better coordination among United Nations system organizations dealing with science and technology, UNDP fully shares the analysis expressed in the JIU report and is working as an organization and as the leader of the resident coordinator system in this direction.

C. Review of management and administration in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (JIU/REP/2001/3)

Scope

9. The objective of the report is to identify areas for improvement in the management and administration practices in ITU within the framework of the ongoing reform process.

Recommendations of interest to UNDP

10. The most important recommendation of interest to UNDP is that the legislative organs may wish to decide that the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference should be convened every two years, for a period of not more than three weeks.

Comments by UNDP

11. A two-year periodicity of the Plenipotentiary Conference will bring ITU more in line with the large majority of the other organizations of the United Nations system that convene their legislative bodies either annually or biennially. A better alignment of periodicity would have an impact on better coordination in the United Nations system. It is interesting to note that the JIU report, unlike previous similar reports concerning other United Nations specialized agencies, does not include any recommendations on substantive coordination between ITU and other United Nations agencies members of the CEB.

D. Enhancing governance oversight role: Structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports (JIU/REP/2001/4)

Scope

12. The objective of the report is to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness and quality of the oversight role exercised primarily by the "executive" legislative organs (such as Executive Board or Council) and their subsidiary bodies responsible for oversight issues.

Recommendations of interest to UNDP

13. Among the most important recommendations are: (a) the adoption by the legislative organs of a modus operandi aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of their oversight functions; (b) the suggestion to the legislative organs, depending on the existing arrangements, to adopt measures to rationalize or strengthen governance structures as well as their working methods along the lines set out in the reports for organizations with no oversight committee (i.e., United Nations funds and programmes, and IMO); (c) as a supplement to the measures being taken to improve the handling of reports prepared by oversight mechanisms, the Executive Heads,

following the practice mandated by the General Assembly, should include in the individual sections of programme and budget a summary of the relevant recommendations and related follow-up actions taken.

Comments by UNDP

14. UNDP has established an internal oversight structure, the Management Review Oversight Committee (MROC). The MROC model is currently being recommended by the Office of Internal Oversight Services for adoption by specialized agencies, other funds and programmes. The Executive Board has streamlined its operations over the last few years and UNDP now submits shorter reports with a clear indication of what the decision of the Executive Board might be. The Board holds informal sessions before the scheduled meetings to give members the opportunity to invite their specialists to review reports that they feel require this expertise. This process has worked well and has helped to streamline the working methods of the Board. All relevant issues arising from oversight reports and follow-up measures taken are presented to the Board.

E. Review of management and administration in the World Health Organization (WHO) (JIU/REP/2001/5)

Scope

15. The objective of the report is to identify possible improvements in administrative and management practices in the World Health Organization in view of current reform initiatives in the organization.

Recommendations of interest to UNDP

16. Recommendations of interest to UNDP concern: (a) the nature and level of substantive and administrative services that can be provided by the United Nations resident coordinator system as criteria to determine the nature and extent of WHO country representation; (b) the experience of other United Nations system organizations with regard to functions devolved to administrative support units in programme areas be taken into account by WHO when dealing with delegation of authority and related accountability.

Comments by UNDP

17. UNDP has shared its own experience with the delegation of authority and with accountability with WHO an exercise from which the two agencies have derived mutual benefit.

III. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

18. The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report, particularly those aspects of the JIU reports highlighted that have particular relevance to the work of UNDP.